

LyondellBassel Acetic Acid Unit Reactor Vessel Failure

At 8:46 pm, EPA PDO received a report from the NRC (1311972) from LyondellBassell located at 1515 Cutoff Road, LaPorte, Harris County, TX. The incident occurred at 7:23 pm. The company reported that they had a failure of a reaction vessel that contained 103,00 pounds of a mixture of Acetic Acid, Methyl Iodide, and Hydrogen Iodide. The incident resulted in 30 injuries with 3 transported to the hospital. The released material is draining into their unit drains and underground drainage system to the facility waste wastewater treatment plant that is designed to treat these types of wastes. They are using water spray to knock down any vapors as well as to move the materials down their drains to the wastewater system. The company initiated fence line air monitoring and notified their industrial neighbors of the incident. The company reported that their highest reading along the fence line near the release location was 4.5 ppm acetic acid. Additionally, the company dispatched CTEH (contract air monitoring team) to assist. Harris County Fire Marshall's Office HazMat Team is on-scene assisting in the emergency response effort. Additionally, the Harris County Pollution Control Services is on-scene assisting with air monitoring. Harris County has not identified any air monitoring impacts nor have they received any odor complaints from the public. The TCEQ is on-scene coordinating with the company representatives and monitoring response activities. Potential areas of impact are all industrial. Based upon information received from Harris County Fire Marshalls Office, there are 2 deceased workers. Note: The closest residential properties appear to be 1.19 miles south of the release point (on the south side of SH 225) with winds out of the SSW away from the residential properties. At this time, the Phone Duty Officer does not plan on dispatching an EPA Team to the incident as it appears to be stable with no anticipated impact to the public. OSC Moore will continue to monitor the incident but it appears that the situation is under control.